



**VOICES OF EUROPEAN EMPLOYERS:
CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF THE INCLUSION
OF MIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

**EVIDENCES FROM ITALY, AUSTRIA,
GREECE AND SPAIN.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Third-Country Nationals in Europe still face strong barriers in accessing the labour market and fare worse than natives in employment. Their employment rate is continuously being measured several points lower than EU citizens, with women and refugees struggling more. Even when employed, they usually work below their qualification and skills, they are over represented in some sectors and perform worse in wages, protection and career prospects.

The inclusion of non-UE citizens in the **labour market** is not only key for their effective integration in European societies, but also contributes to Member States' economies. However, there is still a mismatch between labour market and migrants' profiles. Stakeholders, including employers, often lack knowledge on migrants' employment and/or diversity management skills, and stereotypes and discriminatory practices still persist. On the other hand, comprehensive information, training, employment and guidance support for migrants - able to engage the most vulnerable - are still scarce.

The project "[MILE Migrants Integration in the Labour market in Europe](#)" (821725-MILE-AMIF-2018-AG-INTE) - funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - carried out a survey in the **four participating countries** – Austria (region of Tyrol), Greece (regions of Attica and Western Greece), Italy (region of Lombardy) and Spain (region of Catalonia).

MILE is promoted by [ICEI Istituto Cooperazione Economica Internazionale](#), in partnership with seven public and private organisations coming from the above – mentioned countries, with the aim to **develop, implement and mainstream an effective model of integrated services for the integration of Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) in the labour market**, based on multi-sectorial competences, mobilisation of actors and migrants' cultural, social and economic needs.

The **research** aimed to identify:

- Challenges, obstacles and opportunities for third-country nationals labour integration from employers' point of view.
- Needs of the employers in terms of skills (legal, intercultural, etc.) and support by training and employment services and third sector organizations in the phase of selection and tutoring third country employees at the workplace.
- Skills and occupational profiles needed by companies and labour market.

The research was conducted in **three levels**:

1. A **Desk Research** of the labour market trends and requirements, that allowed partners to collect important information with respect to the three axes above. The desk research was conducted by each partner in order to identify the local situation; however, it also had a national scope and a regional focus where appropriate. Based on the outcomes of the desk

research, online and interview questionnaires were designed, aiming to validate, elaborate and contextualize the findings.

2. A **Qualitative Research** which used guided interviews to identify quality aspects. A total of 40 interviews were contacted.
3. A **Quantitative Research** which used an on-line/off-line questionnaire to quantify the aspects under research. A total of 131 questionnaires were answered.

The target of the research, which took place from March to May 2019, was mainly **employers**. Associations of employers and other organisations, such as trade unions, were also targeted.

The goal of this research is not to make a thorough national wide survey but to take a snapshot of current challenges and needs in the target areas. The tools used in this research can be, however used in a research with a much wider geographical scope.

KEY FINDINGS

HIRING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

- The use of non-formal hiring channels (referrals from colleagues) are a very strong trend in Greece and a usual channel in Spain. Italy and Austria mainly use other channels such as social media and the Web.
- Standard company procedures for assessing new candidates are used for non-UE citizens in all countries.
- Employers have generally low awareness of how to use internship and/or apprenticeship programmes for hiring non- EU citizens.
- Employers have generally low or very low awareness of hiring policies that encourage diversity.
- Language is affirmed as a major barrier for hiring third country nationals in all countries.
- Lack of general education is a barrier for hiring third country nationals in all countries.
- National support for hiring and employing third country nationals is a major barrier for hiring them in Greece and Spain. It is reported as a barrier by some of the Italian employers but not from Austrian ones.
- Culture integration doesn't not seem to be a very significant barrier for hiring migrants in all countries.
- Hiring a migrant in Greece, Italy and in Spain is not an easy task due to the bureaucracy that is involved. The national legislation, rules and procedures for third country nationals to acquire visa, residence or work permits are quite complicated, rather limiting and definitely time-consuming.
- Most Greek and Spanish SMEs that participated in the survey do not have in place any special policies for managing diversity or supporting non-UE employees.

EMPLOYING THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

- Most employers occupy 1-15 third country nationals.
- Most employed third country nationals are young, between the ages of 18-35 years old.
- Mostly male third country nationals are employed in Greece and Spain.
- Most employed third country nationals have primary and secondary education credentials.
- Most employed third country nationals are not overqualified for their current job positions.
- Most employed third country nationals have moderate language skills.
- Major barriers in migrants' employment in all countries are legal issues and the restricted right to work in the host country.
- The use of Cultural Mediators/External Consultants for supporting TCN employment is, overall, very limited.
- The majority of respondents pointed out that employing third country nationals was a very positive experience.

THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS JOB PROFILE

- In all countries, language skills are considered important either in the form of verbal communication or in the form of listening and understanding.
- Multilingual verbal communication might be considered a valuable skill for finding a job in promising sectors (i.e. tourism sector).
- Professionalism, team working and conflict management are the most important cooperation skills. Learning is also deemed important, while skills such as leadership and networking/negotiating received lower ratings.
- Digital skills may be considered important for finding jobs in specific sectors since they received, rather high ratings in some countries. However, they seem not be as important as they are considered for country nationals.
- For South European countries, critical thinking and problem solving is considered an important skill.
- Previous work experience is considered valuable in Greece and in Spain but not so much in Italy and Austria.
- In all countries, the job offerings that are going to be increased in the next few years are in the sectors of:
 - Sales and Services
 - Business, Finance and AdministrationIn Italy, significant demand is also expected in the Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and in the Health sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the survey, the following general policy recommendations are proposed:

1. Electronic services for managing the hiring process of third country nationals

Electronic services are needed for searching third country nationals, especially those that poses specialization skills. This requires standardization procedures for capturing and cataloguing migrants' skills and qualifications and mapping them to job profiles (use of EU skill taxonomies). Recommendation systems that match jobs offered to available third country nationals. These services should promote in practice, equal access to employment by ensuring equal treatment in terms of recruitment, career advancement, working conditions, pay, health and safety at work.

2. E-government services for managing administrative processes

Simplification of legal and administrative processes via the use of public to government services that manage the lifecycle of legal process related to third country nationals hiring and employment.

3. One stop-shop for information on hiring and employing third country nationals

Electronic service that provides support and orientation on all issues that are related to hiring and employing non-EU citizens. Guidelines for employers recruiting or intending to recruit foreign labour. On-line and vis a vis support from cultural mediators for managing diversity issues. Cooperation with sectorial associations for providing specialised support.

4. Benefits for employers that hire third country nationals

Employers that employ migrants should be supported by national or regional agencies and receive reduced taxation bonuses. Provide funding to encourage employers to establish apprenticeship opportunities.

5. Fast programmes for language learning

Fast programmes (e.g. with a duration of 6 months) for learning basic language skills. Advanced programmes for learning job-specific terms.

6. Lifelong learning programmes for TCNs

Lifelong training and re-qualification programmes for third country nationals that need to acquire basic skills or upscale their existing competencies in order to get better job opportunities.

7. Lifelong learning programmes for Employers

Training programmes for employees that need to work in diverse environments.

To know more about the project MILE and the research, please visit:



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